DANCE 241: Modern Dance I
M/W/F 10-11:50AM  ENS 200/ENS 380  Fall 2013
Instructors: Jess Humphrey (jess@jesshumphrey.com)
Office hours: by appointment

“The dancing does the teaching, the teacher points to that.” -Steve Paxton

Course Objectives:
1. Practice contemporary modern dance. Use this practice, along with observation of the form, as ways to keep its definition alive in our body-minds and to contribute to the evolution of the form.
2. Engage in a somatic approach to dance training.
3. Gain strength through increased biomechanical efficiency. In other words, learn some basics about the science of movement so we have the ability work “smarter not harder” when we choose to.
4. Embody research about what it means to be “in shape”.
5. Become more comfortable and facile while inverted and/or off balance.
6. Move three dimensionally within our bodies and through space.
7. Learn to notice our body-minds as they change each day, track those changes, and allow resulting observations to influence our dancing and way of being in the world.
8. Experience gravity, momentum, inertia, and other laws of physics, kinesthetically.
9. Co-negotiate the aforementioned physical laws with others.
10. Notice how feedback from touch influences our experience.
11. Practice communicating verbally, orally, and in writing about our experience of dancing as well as what we see as spectators/audience, members/witnesses in class, and in performance settings.
12. Recognize that we are learning as a community and consider how dancing in relationship affects our own process.
13. Allow class experiences to influence our lives outside the dance studio.
14. Experience stillness and its potential power in dance and life in general.
15. Allow our investment in every lesson in class to reveal our love of dancing.
16. Disconnect from the internet, our cell phones, and other technology so we can focus on our physical experience in the present moment.

Course Description:
This movement course is a context for you to begin or continue your practice of contemporary modern dance. Classes will consist of movement combinations and somatic explorations designed to give you a more embodied knowledge of your anatomy and what it/you can do. A kinesthetic understanding of efficient movement patterns can support you in expressing yourself fully and safely. We will learn basic biomechanics, use imagery, develop our senses, and build our neuromuscular coordination, but we will also take time to let go of it all and enjoy dancing. Writing will be approached as a somatic process designed to help you deepen your understanding of class material and to use what you learn to further develop the lens through which you view the performing arts.

Evaluation Criteria:
1. Proficiency (30%):
Evaluation will be of students’ improvement in the areas described in the Course Objectives, and students’ stated goals (see Self-Reflection assignment below). These points will be awarded based on the students’ practice and performance of class material throughout the semester and the warm-up quiz somewhere near Monday, October 2nd (10%). We will have a set warm-up based on Bartenieff Fundamentals and you must have it memorized to receive full credit.
2. Participation (60%):

*IMPORTANT:* Please see Attendance Policy, below.

This grade will reflect students’:
- willingness to engage, physically and verbally
- attitude toward moments of perceived failure
- level of respect toward other students’ processes and progress
- willingness to safely "try on" certain concepts physically before fully understanding them mentally
- remaining curious and interested in physical explorations
- attentiveness to others when they speak
- willingness to attempt to articulate their physical experience before it is totally understood
- ability to articulate how experience in class affects or relates to their life outside of class
- willingness to ask questions

3. Concert attendance (10%):

Attend two professional modern or contemporary dance concerts. Turn in the ticket stub for each of them with your name on it.

**Concert #1 (5%):** Lucy Guerin at UCSD presented by Art Power on Wednesday, October 9th. For more information: [http://artpwr.com/](http://artpwr.com/)

**Concert #2 (5%):** A concert of your choice. If you learn of a performance that you are interested in attending, please check to see if it is appropriate for this course. I will announce shows that I know of as they come up throughout the semester, but it is ultimately your responsibility to find one to attend BEFORE the end of the semester! You can also email Jennifer Oliver at jennifer@yasandiego.org and request to be added to her list anytime after September 11th. She sends out e-blasts of many dance events in San Diego.

4. Self-Reflection (10%):

Through contemplation, weekly, in-class free writes, and other forms of self-reflection, my hope is that you will experience goal-setting as a way to frame your experience and steer your energies rather than a method for to measure or tally your achievements. It will also give me an additional lens through which to evaluate you in the Proficiency category, listed under Evaluation Criteria. There are two steps to this process.

**Part 1 (5%):** Describe three goals or research interests related to this class. Be specific! Please number and handwrite your goals in the space below your signature on the last page of this syllabus and bring the sheet to class by Wednesday, September 4th. Do this twice! That way you’ll have a copy for yourself, and you’ll have your own hard copy of everything, you’ll have them to refer to when you approach the second part of this assignment at the end of the semester, AND you’ll already be “researching” with them as you write them down a second time.

**Part 2 (5%):** Type a reflection on your experience with each of these goals. Did a few of them fade into the background? Which one(s) received the most attention? Did any of the goals shift and, if so, how might you re-word them as you move forward? Did any of your goals lead you to new goals throughout the semester? As with any written work, please include at least one specific example to illustrate each of your main points. Due Monday, December 2nd.

5. Attendance policy

**Absences:** You are allowed 3 absences. Each absence beyond the 3, no matter what the excuse, will result in lowering of final grade 1/3 of step, i.e., A to A-. Situations such as serious illness, long-term injury, or family emergencies may be dealt with immediately on an individual basis. In some cases, students will be given an Incomplete to be made up within the next semester. In other cases, I may recommend withdrawal from the course. If you stop attending the course without following procedure you will receive a “U” which calculates as an “F”. Lastly, you are expected to be present in both mind and body. If you are physically present, but your attention is elsewhere in a way that effects the class, I may mark you absent.
**Tardies:** Please be on time to class. 3 tardies equals 1 absence! If you are more than 10 minutes late, you will have missed too much of the warmup to safely participate and must observe and take notes.

**Observation:** If you are ill or injured, you may observe class two times with instructor’s consent. See me prior to class if possible. Detailed notes (typed) about the class and your observations must be submitted at the next class or you will be marked absent!

**Important considerations for those observing:**
- Notes should go beyond listing class activities. Pay attention to what the students are doing in relation to the instructor’s directions. Make correlations between what you see, what you hear, and what you personally experience when you are physically participating in the class. How does observing class further enrich your kinesthetic and cognitive understanding of dance?
- Please be aware that your presence as a witness greatly influences the class. How can you observe in a way that contributes rather than detracts from what’s happening in the room?
- Observe from different locations in the room, paying attention with respect and generosity. It’s a great opportunity to practice these qualities of mind. How does this kind of attention effect what you notice?
- Participate in class discussions. What is your experience?
- If you check your phone or open your computer or tablet, you will be asked to leave and you will be marked absent. In rare occasions, I may ask you to take a photo or video and upload it. These are the only exceptions to this rule!

**Make-up classes:** You may make up only 1 absence by attending the contact improvisation class/jam at Stage 7 in North Park, Monday nights at 7pm. Class is from 7pm until 8pm and the jam is from 8pm until 10pm. The class costs $10, cash only. For more information: [http://jesshumphrey.com/wordpress/project/contact-improvisation-class-jam/](http://jesshumphrey.com/wordpress/project/contact-improvisation-class-jam/)

Another option is to take a Saturday morning ATM® (Awareness Through Movement®) class in Hillcrest. For more information: [http://www.feldenkraisresources.com/about_the_institute.html](http://www.feldenkraisresources.com/about_the_institute.html)

**Grading:**
Definition of Grades for Undergraduate Students at SDSU:
- Grade of A (outstanding achievement; available only for the highest accomplishment), 4 points;
- B (praiseworthy performance; definitely above average), 3 points;
- C (average; awarded for satisfactory performance; the most common undergraduate grade), 2 points;
- D (minimally passing; less than the typical undergraduate achievement), 1 point;
- F (failing), 0 points;

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93%</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>67-69%</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>60-63%</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69%</td>
<td>Below 60%: F</td>
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**University Policies**
- Please check the Class Schedule for add and drop deadlines!
- This class may be taken for Pass/No Pass. Check with your Counselor first; then fill out the proper form. To Pass, a student must earn at least 70 percent of the points possible in the class.
- If you have a hidden or visible disability, which may require classroom or test accommodations, please see me as soon as possible during a scheduled office hour. This must happen at the beginning of the semester! If you have not already done so, please visit Student Disability Services, [http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/sds/](http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/sds/)

**Expectations**
This list is meant to give you a better idea of what I expect from each of you.
• Get the amount of rest, eat the kind of foods, wear the type of clothes and fix your hair in ways that will allow you to fully participate in class.
• Begin preparing for class by 9:55 AM, or as soon as you enter the room, by physically reviewing what you learned in Body Modalities.
• Check the syllabus before you email me! If the answer is in the syllabus, I won't respond to your email.
• Keep an electronic copy of everything you turn in.
• If you are absent, learn the material you missed from your fellow students before the next class.
• If I give you something to work on in class, keep practicing, even if you feel you have it down. There is always more to find in any given movement! You also have the option of offering support to other students who might need help.
• Take responsibility for your own education. Be curious, look things up on your own time, and ask questions.

Open Door Policy:
Please do not hesitate to contact me or set up a time during my office hours to discuss any questions or concerns you have about the class or the material covered in class.

Please sign/date below, print your goals below, and bring this page to the next class meeting.
I, ____________________, have read the syllabus for DANCE 241 and understand the course requirements.

print name

______________________________  __________________________
Date                                  Signature